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ABSTRACT

Although English-as-a-second-language (ESL) practitioners are generally making good progress in teaching listening and speaking skills, the entire area of teaching literacy skills to ESL students is barely in the formative stage. The teaching of ESL is further complicated when students are not only lacking in English literacy skills but are also functionally illiterate in their native languages. Educators need to become more aware of the special problems that even the most motivated ESL students face when learning a language that is as difficult to learn as is English. Whereas many ESL programs have been predicated on the notion that students must be orally proficient before they can read English, research shows that reading and speaking can be taught concurrently. To facilitate the teaching of reading and writing in the ESL classroom, educators should provide early and systematic instruction in areas such as phonetic spelling, writing mechanics, structural analysis, study skills, and test taking. In addition, planners of ESL and literacy programs should devote more effort to pooling the resources of smaller local programs to avoid duplication, solicit cooperation from and work together with business and industry, offer counseling services, and provide necessary staff development activities. (MN)

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TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) TO ADULTS: STATE-OF-THE-ART

By Diane M. Longfield

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INTRODUCTION

The invention of reading and writing to represent the sounds of a spoken language goes back to the times of pre-history. It is perhaps the most far reaching achievement of the human mind next to the use of the articulate sound to express and communicate thought.

Throughout history the knowledge of reading and writing was limited in use to a particular class of religious and political rulers as an instrument of power. As societies became more populated and complex, there was a widening circle of those who needed to be able to read and write. In spite of this, the spread of literacy was a gradual process, and even in the most highly developed societies, its extension to the general populace is a fairly recent innovation. Actually, what would have been the purpose of literacy for the masses prior to the introduction of printing? The point is that until recently, illiteracy was not a problem. Indeed, it was the Industrial Revolution that necessitated an increasing need for literate people and the unprecedented electronic revolution is hurdling us toward the need of a totally literate society.

However technologically advanced the United States is however, we have approximately 23 million functionally illiterate adults. Educating "our own" is naturally a primary concern. But we don't live in isolation. There are fledgling Third World countries that are attempting to assume the responsibilities and privileges of sovereign states. The needs of the people of these countries may be simple enough so that the spoken word is sufficient. As

they find themselves thrust in the policies and economics of this ever changing world, they are handicapped with a populace that may be on the whole illiterate. Illiteracy is a potent factor in international relations and has a bearing on issues of war and peace. We are well aware of the military dictators who come and fool the masses with empty promises and full gun barrels.

Where are the gun barrels firing? They're firing from Afghanistan to El Salvador. When the guns are fired there are those ever courageous persons who risk their lives and their family's lives to seek refuge and freedom. When they arrive at our shores, they are penniless, speak no English and possibly are illiterate in their own language. The following is a list of countries with the percent of people over the age of 15 who cannot read or write:[1]

Asia

Afghanistan	90%
Cambodia	45%
India	71%
Laos	88%
Pakistan	86%
Vietnam	75%

North America

El Salvador	43%
Nicaragua	50%
Haiti	80%

The rate of illiteracy in Africa and Asia is 90%. Additionally, there are those immigrants who are bursting through our borders seeking economic improvement. An example is Mexico which has a 35% rate of illiteracy.

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[1]"Illiteracy," The World Book Encyclopedia, 1980, 12, 64-66.

In FY82, approximately 620,000 of the refugees that were admitted into the United States were Southeast Asians. Of those, 67% were Vietnamese, 20% Laotian, and 13% Cambodian.[2] Furthermore, it has been estimated that two million Mexicans have crossed our borders. When looking at the rates of illiteracy of these countries, we can pretty well assume that many are functionally illiterate in their own language. Even if refugees are functionally literate in their own language, that level of literacy may not meet the necessities of our highly complex, technological society. Functional literacy in the United States means the ability to complete a job application form, read and follow directions on cleaning fluids, understand and pay a utility bill, and comprehend the terms of a simple contract such as a lease. These new arrivals are expected to gracefully handle overwhelming problems: they must deal with culture shock along with a sense of loneliness, isolation and loss; they must learn a second language and become functionally literate. Though they now live in a free society, they cannot achieve genuine freedom as dependent, underprivileged, non-English speakers who may or may not have functional literacy skills.

Because we accept refugees and documented aliens on our shores, they too have become "our own". They are our future citizens. We owe them the same kind of educational opportunities and the accompanying financial support we give native Americans.

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[2]Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement, FY82.

Helping adults to become functionally literate is correctly a part of adult education. When literacy training is complicated by the fact that the learner is a foreign speaker, an issue that is already complex is compounded. Reverse the tables momentarily. Imagine functionally illiterate Americans attempting to live in Japan, for example. What would be the likelihood of their learning enough Japanese to read want ads and train schedules? How difficult would it be for those of us who are already literate in English to learn to speak, read and write Japanese?

Regardless of the complications, the reasons for being literate are self-evident. On one end of the spectrum, it means being able to read a street sign or a box label. On the other end, it means eradicating disease and poverty, improving involvement in national citizenship and moving toward self-realization. From government's point of view, it makes sense to invest in refugees and immigrants. We all would like to see the national welfare dependency rate for refugees be drastically reduced from the September, 1982 rate of 52%.[3]

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[3]Source: Report of the Undersecretary of Health and Human Services, David Swoap, at the September, 1982 meeting of the refugee subcommittee.

THE ADULT LEARNER

Whether the student in the ABE (Adult Basic Education) classroom is a native American or a LEPS (Limited English Proficient Speaker), both are adults and as such, they share some common characteristics:

1. Adults are goal oriented. They want learnings to immediately apply to real-life problems. The materials must be realistic and relevant. Recall is best when material is learned in a context that is similar to the one in which it is to be used. Because participation is voluntary, if the activities do not fit the expectations, they may withdraw from the ABE program.

2. Since adults do not see, hear and react as quickly as children, they require more time for reaction and more practice for performance.

3. Adults require ideal environmental conditions. The furniture must be adult-sized, the lighting excellent, print must be clear and readable, and so on.

4. Adults need to maintain a sense of dignity. They may be doubtful of their ability to learn. They need to achieve, sense security, receive peer approval and feel that what they are doing makes sense in terms of an overall life style.

5. The multiple responsibilities, burdens and stresses of adult life make active and regular attendance and participation in education difficult. Therefore, ABE programs need flexible schedules.

6. The past educational experiences of illiterate adults may be so negative or irrelevant that they may have a poor self

image and lack self confidence. They may have a negative attitude for the establishment, including school and figures of authority. Thus, functionally illiterate adults need the warmth and understanding of an enlightened teacher who will set the learner at ease, emphasize the positive, be patient and understanding, and set educational objectives around the students needs and potential.

7. Because of the wide range of individual differences among adults, varied learning activities must be presented to achieve similar objectives.

8. Adults are more likely to learn if there is active participation, immediate feedback, and if connections can be established between new learnings and relevant prior knowledge and experience.

9. Old habits and attitudes that have been well learned interfere with new learning. It is easier for an experienced adult to learn a completely new task than to learn to do a familiar task in a new way.

10. The more educated and experienced adult has learned how to learn. He has a learning strategy and expects to learn. Unfortunately, the converse is also true.

11. ABE students are often experienced in the "school of life" so much more than the teachers who teach them. Refugees have lived through war, experienced starvation, chanced death, left families behind and have dealt with culture shock. As such they merit our respect.

It is a challenge to teach adults. They come with a great

amount of stored knowledge and experience that can both help and hinder them. When they come to school, they are deeply interested and highly motivated. It is up to us as educators to meet the challenge and address their needs.

PROBLEMS IN TEACHING ESL TO ADULTS

Adults can and do learn. They seem to have more inhibitions in learning a new language because of their fear of making mistakes and appearing foolish. When learning the new language is a matter of survival in their new country, they are positively motivated. Compared to children, adults need more specific and formal instruction and require more time and effort to acquire and learn a second language. There are many problems in learning English and becoming functionally literate in a second language:

1. Since many of the refugees and immigrants are functionally illiterate in their own language, we can safely assume that formal education was interrupted at an early stage. It has been suggested that interruption of the development in the native language before linguistic skills are consolidated, which occurs around the age of 10 or 11, may have a destabilizing effect on cognitive development (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1979; Cummins, 1979).

Additionally, native English speakers have heard and spoken English for about six years before any systematic attempt is made to transfer their aural-oral skill to reading. The natural progression is to listen to the language, learn to speak it and then become literate in it. So, ESL teachers are often expected to teach two subjects at once: ESL and literacy skills to students who may have poor cognitive development. Modiano asserts that "when we confuse the learning of a second language with the learning of reading, we only succeed in confusing the learner mightily to the end that we retard the learning to read

in either language and discourage academic achievement in any language."[4]

Current research seems to indicate that there may be some advantages to teaching illiterate language learners to read in their native tongue before teaching them to read in English. The rationale seems simple. "Since reading is language related, native speakers of other languages can be taught more easily to read the tongue they have understood and spoken since birth. The entire reading skill can then be transferred to the reading of English."[5] In other words, students who are illiterate in their native languages, ideally should be taught to read in their native languages before attempting to learn to read in English.

In truth, more experimentation is required in this area. But, regardless of what is the ideal, we know that in reality:
a) It would be too time consuming and costly to establish Language Arts programs for adult students in their first language.
b) Foreign adults do not have time to spend becoming literate in their own language. Their immediate need is to learn English and to become functionally literate in it as quickly as possible.
c) It would be politically unsavory to fund Bilingual Education for adults when Bilingual Education for children is already so severely criticized.

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[4]Nancy Modiano, "National or Mother Language in Beginning Reading: A Comparative Study," Research in the Teaching of Reading, 1968, 1:32-43.

[5]Mary Finocchiaro, English as a Second Language, (New York, 1969), p. 136.

In short, Limited English Proficient Speakers are at a much greater disadvantage than native Americans in becoming functionally literate.

2. Secondly, becoming literate in English is complicated by the insanity of our language. Native ABE students would have enough difficulty with:

though, cough, tough
through, hiccough, plough

What about these?

horse - worse	how - low
ballet - mallet	wind - mind
shoes - does	alive - live

According to Frank Smith, each one of us who is literate knows how to spell at least 50,000 words which we have memorized since the rules governing English spellings prove useless in light of the many exceptions. Furthermore, we are aware of another 1,000 we cannot spell because we learned incorrect spellings.

Consider then the enormous difficulties in not only learning to speak English but to also learn to read and write words such as those listed above. What about homonyms (waist-waste, gorilla-guerilla), and idiomatic language (to get forty winks, to smell a rat, to be a big shot)? I remember a dear student who was extremely upset because she had learned that a friend of hers had been fired that morning. She begged me to drive her to the hospital to see her friend whom she assumed was in a burn-unit.

ESL students also have difficulty with common hyperboles.

Imagine a boat person who suffered days of hunger with only contaminated water to drink attempting to comprehend an obviously well-fed, healthy American saying, "I'm starving to death.", "I'm dying of exhaustion." or "My feet are killing me." LEPS also have to deal with imbedded meanings as with product promotions where "new" can mean a new color or wrapper and "performance proven" means it will only operate through the warranty period.[6] Truly English is "tough stuff".

3. A third problem in teaching ESL is related to the fact that strictly learning English and becoming literate in it does not guarantee that a foreign adult will function successfully in the United States. This problem is related to the issue of cultural differences.

Our culture molds how we perceive experiences so we inhabit a different sensory world from that of other peoples. A foreigner's culture clashes head on with that of the predominant culture. Years ago with the first wave of Vietnamese refugees, there was a Vietnamese woman for whom I felt a special respect and kinship. One day after class she recounted the kidnapping of her husband by the Communists and the eventual death of her two babies. She did so while smiling and giggling. I was shocked by her callous attitude. The misunderstanding was a two way street. I didn't realize she was "masking" her emotions and she hadn't learned to express sorrow in a typical American way. In short, we can

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[6]Louis Sodubolim, "Technology Through Rose-Colored Glasses," Design News, (May 2, 1977), p. 9.

misjudge foreigners as being boorish, inept, or lacking refinement when our cultures clash. The newcomer can also misjudge us and not wish to become acculturated.

The implication is that language needs to be taught in a cultural context. Additionally, non-verbal communication is as potent as verbal communication. Students need to be taught the acceptable distance maintained between speakers (proxemics); appropriate gestures, facial expressions and bodily movements (kinesics); and non-articulated sounds, pauses, speed and melody (paralinguistics). These are an integral part of communication and are culturally bound.

ESL students need to understand, respect, and ultimately become a part of the American culture. Teachers need to become aware of the American culture and be able to explain it to students. Teachers need to understand and respect the cultures of their students too. In so doing, differences can be explained to avoid cultural conflict.

4. In learning a second language, there is also the problem of interference from the mother tongue. False cognates provide an example. In Spanish, "embarazada" means pregnant. Knowing this, you can understand the Hispanic male's reluctance to say "I'm embarrassed". Culture also determines the use of language. For an American a clock "runs" but in Spanish the word is "camina" meaning "walks". The difference is not only linguistic, it also implies a different cultural perception of time. Also, sounds vary from language to language. Hispanics have difficulty hearing

and producing different vowel sounds such as in:

dip-deep / hit-heat / scene-sin

The Vietnamese, Lao and Black Tai have tonal languages and thus have difficulty in understanding spoken English and in producing the English sentence melody. Tonal languages of Southeast Asia have few sequences of sounds compared to the consonant clusters in English. In Vietnamese, clusters are limited to ones containing "w". "Swung" can be easily pronounced but a word like "drenched" is likely to become "dlen". Differences in grammatical systems also causes interference. For example, in the Southeast Asian languages there is no suffix to indicate past time. Therefore, they might say "Yesterday, I work". Knowing these kinds of problems will assist teachers in zeroing in on language learning problems and help them appreciate the mental gymnastics students have to flip through to produce a second language.

5. The fifth problem is socio-linguistic in nature. Foreign adults come to this country with certain dreams, hopes and expectations. Sometimes Americans not only disappoint them, we also traumatize the. Sometimes we stereotype foreigners and our prejudices are a major impediment to their success in a community. "The perception of ethnicity among immigrant groups has resulted in their almost total linguistic and cultural isolation from members of the dominant society. The isolation may provide a degree of social and psychological security but the price is high. Lack of interaction skills result in job and social frustrations."[7]

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[7]John A. Neimi, "Cross Cultural Communication and the Adult Educator", Literary Discussion, Winter, 1974.

We all know it is true that refugees and immigrants are often relegated to the most menial of jobs and the shabbiest of housing. People from different cultures not only speak a different language, they also perceive a different sensory world and see reality differently. They prefer different foods, may smell differently, wear strange clothing and use different body language. In America individuality is okay, but being different is not okay. As contradictory as it may seem, Americans have long praised the benefits of learning other languages. At the same time we attempt to depricate and eradicate some languages brought to this country by native speakers. Matched guise studies using recordings of the same individual speaking English, a foreign language and an accented variety of English show that the non-English and accented guise is consistently rated lower in ability and intelligence (Lambert et al, 1975). Lambert concludes that these negative attitudes of the dominant group can have a depressing effect on minority student achievement.

6. The next problem is a difficult one to diagnose. We can only assume that the same percentage of learning disabled adults are in the foreign population as in the American population. We know that there are an estimated 25 million Americans who suffer from a learning disability, a catchall term that is defined by the United States Department of Education as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language." While diagnostic-testing is available in Spanish, instruments are not readily available for

other Limited English Proficient Speakers.

7. An adult ESL class is probably more heterogeneous than a native American ABE class. In a class of 25, an ESL teacher may have four or five different language groups. This immediately implies different perceptions, attitudes and learning styles which are culturally determined. Within the language groups there may be problems in the mix of social class and sexes. Between the groups there may be prejudice.

Some students may have studied English in their native countries, know how to read and write it, but not know how to listen to it or speak it. A typical example may be the wives of Japanese businessmen. In the same class there will inevitably be differing levels of educational background. It is not a sound educational practice to mix those students who are illiterate in their own language in the same class with those who have academic habits and reading skills. In effect, all ESL classes are multi-level and multi-problematic. Some students may become frustrated and quit if they feel their specific needs aren't being met . . . and isn't funding dependent on attendance? It takes a special program and teacher to sensitively juggle all of these considerations.

8. Lastly, there are several other problems in teaching ESL that merit mention.

a) While there is an ample market of ESL materials for adults, most assume the adult is literate and will transfer literacy skills to the second language. Few materials are available for teaching

literacy skills to the Limited English Proficient Speaker.

b) It may not be feasible for some workers to come to class after work and to do homework. Family responsibilities and fatigue may preclude homework and regular attendance.

c) Open enrollment and frequent absences make sequential teaching difficult and frustrating.

d) There is a lack of research in the entire area of ESL literacy. Many questions need to be answered and longitudinal studies need to be made.

THE ESL TEACHER

The focus of attention has usually been on the ESL student with little or no attention to the practitioner. The most dedicated of educators I have ever known are adult ESL teachers. Who else would be totally devoted to a part-time job with low pay, no benefits, irregular house, lack of job security, little or no support staff, few materials and no recognition.

ESL teachers must practically walk on water. They must be flexible to be able to handle open enrollment and varying attendance. They must be patient of the typical adult hesitancies. They must be sensitive to the emotional impact of culture shock, the change in status and the reduced self-esteem of their students. They must learn about and respect other cultures. They must be tactful in pointing out errors and be enthusiastic often times late into the evening. They must be good listeners who are genuinely warm and friendly. ESL teachers should know each of their students on a one-to-one basis, demonstrating caring and positive expectations. This willingness to go the extra mile and this sense of commitment is in need of reward.

On an academic level, the ESL instructor should have a degree in Adult Education, ESL and/or Linguistics. A thorough knowledge is needed of the English language, ESL methodology and techniques, the adult learner and the American culture. It is not necessary though for the ESL teacher to speak the language(s) of the students. However, knowledge of the broad characteristics of other cultures and languages is. While pay and job security are seriously lacking for the ESL teacher, the students do pay a

portion of the huge debt owed to ESL teachers by providing a great deal of respect and gratification. To teach foreign adults is a lesson in courage and humility. Their life experiences and personal sacrifices to get to America leave us in awe. They are a contribution to American society, not a drain. Their backbone, earnest and sense of striving bring to mind the determination of our forefathers, all of whom were technically speaking, aliens.

ESL: THE STATE-OF-THE ART

Before we can speak about the state-of-the art in ESL, we must answer the question, "What do we want the students to learn?" Simply stated, we want Limited English Proficient Speakers to be able to comprehend English when spoken at work or at school and in all the in-between real life situations. We want them to speak with reasonable clarity so as to be able to express their needs and fulfill their desires. Illiterate Limited English Proficient Speakers need to develop pre-reading skills from perceiving the link between oral and written language to recognizing letters, their sounds and words. Once basic skills are achieved, we want them to move from phonetic analysis to comprehension at increasingly higher levels of difficulty. We want Limited English Proficient Speakers to also develop the basic skills of writing in English from holding a pencil to being able to copy, punctuate and capitalize; from completing forms to writing simple notes and letters that are legible and intelligible.

The next question that needs to be answered is, "What is the best way to learn ESL?" Well, since the Limited English Proficient Speaker is living his language experience, language needs to be taught in an experiential manner. Allowance has to be made for the fact that there are two different ways of internalizing language. The first is that which Krashen calls "acquisition". This refers to the development of language proficiency without a conscious recourse to rules. At this stage, the acquirer must receive "comprehensible input", i.e. hear language he understands which communicates a message in a low anxiety environment.

Learners move from pre-speech to single word responses toward speech. The ESL teacher should speak slower at the level of acquisition. There should be "longer pauses at natural breaks . . . exaggerated intonation accompanies by appropriate body language and movement. Vocabulary can be modified to include high frequency words with fewer idioms and less slang."[8] Simplification of structure (not concept) also helps. "I'm afraid your repeated tardiness jeopardizes your position." can be translated to "Don't be late again or you are finished working here." Since the Limited English Proficient Speaker is acquiring the language at this stage, concentration on "language drills and grammar exercises which, by their very nature, are out of context and contain no important message to be conveyed to the learner"[9] should be avoided. What we want is to teach the language not to teach about the language. How many Americans know what a predicate adjective is or the subjunctive? Knowledge of grammar rules does not necessarily foster communication.

The State-of-the Art in teaching ESL listening and speaking skills is in very good condition. Programs accept the axiom that what is taught in the classroom needs to be related to the actual context of the student's life. Publishing companies have produced many good specialized teaching materials (texts, workbooks, realia,

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[8]Tracy D. Terrell, "The Natural Approach in Bilingual Education", in Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework, (Los Angeles, 1982), p. 124.

[9]Ibid., p. 125.

visuals, tapes, filmstrips, etc.) for different levels of proficiency in ESL. Many ESL methodologies have been developed which are based on sound educational theories. They include the Natural Approach, the Notional-Functional Method, the Audio-Lingual Approach and the Silent Way, to name a few. Lastly, teachers are beginning to employ the various methods and to plan a variety of activities aimed at global concepts in an attempt to meet the different learning styles of individual students.

While the acquisition stage is adequate for situations in which the context is supplied informationally, it is not adequate for successfully functioning in the decontextualized demands of formal schooling, particularly in the written language of textbooks and the operational and instructional manuals in the field of labor.

This leads us to the second way of internalizing language, that is through learning. Simply stated, it makes sense to teach the skills of reading and writing to Limited English Proficient Speakers with the understanding that it takes much more time to teach those students who are functionally illiterate in their own language because of the subtractive effects of language experience. Cummins (1980) in his "Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis" assumes that the second language competence is partially a function of first language competence at the time of exposure to the second language.[10] This may account for the modest success of ESL literacy programs.

Until recently, the main thrust of most ESL programs has been

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[10]Eleanor W. Thonis, "Reading Instruction for Language Minority Students", in Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework, (Los Angeles, 1982), p. 161.

to teach foreign students to speak English, and rightly so. It has generally been accepted that the order of teaching ESL is: listening --- speaking --- reading --- writing. Most ESL materials utilize the various ESL methods to foster the communication skills necessary to meet the student's basic language needs in that order. Thus, the teaching of reading is for the most part "postponed" and when reading is introduced, little or no attention is given to it's systematic development. As a matter of fact, most ESL materials introduce reading and writing exercises as a reinforcement to the listening and speaking skills; again, justifiably so. This technique is particularly successful with students who are literate in their own language and who transfer word attack skills from their language to English, even when their language does not use the Roman alphabet. However, we cannot disregard the percentage of ESL students who need literacy training.

The problem has been that most practitioners have assumed that before Limited English Proficient Speakers can read in English, they must have oral proficiency in English. In my opinion, this assumption has left tombstones where monuments to ESL literacy could have been built. Of course, Limited English Proficient Speakers need to learn to speak English but to totally shift away from concentration on paper and pencil, book-oriented activities to strictly oral conversations and pattern drills is the fulfillment of only half of our responsibilities.

> "Reading as a receptive language process seems to develop more rapidly than speaking, a productive process. It is not uncommon for non-native speakers of English to understand what they have read but not

> be able to retell it orally in English. Reading need not then follow oral development but may parallel to it and contribute to general language control."[11]

I believe that if we teach ESL students to speak English in a structurally sequenced manner in order to guarantee success, we can also teach them reading and writing systematically in order to guarantee success.

The real problem now is the lack of materials designed for persons just learning to speak the language who are at the zero level in reading and writing skills. There was no need for such materials before the influx of refugees and immigrants from Latin American countries. Also, the theory had been that you didn't teach such persons literacy skills until their listening and speaking skills were proficient. Fortunately, there are a few excellent student resources listed in Appendix A and there are numerous techniques being implemented to facilitate the teaching of reading and writing in the ESL classroom. The following is a summary of some of these techniques.

1. The Language Experience Approach provides a way for the student to acquire the basic skills of reading, using comfortable, familiar and non-threatening material, his own. The student uses his experience to dictate a story which a teacher copies verbatim, along with grammatical errors. The teacher reads the story back to the student who in turn edits the story. The story becomes the student's reading material for which the teacher designs a variety

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[11]Kenneth Goodman and others, Reading in the Bilingual Classroom. National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

of reading exercises.

2. Strip Stories deal with life coping situations that match student needs and interests. They contain vocabulary and sentence patterns common to oral English and employ cues about sequence. Basically, the idea is to write a story, sentence by sentence, on individual strips of paper, shuffle them up and challenge the students to put the story back together. Each student reads his sentence. As the context of the story becomes apparent, leaders emerge. Different sequences are tried until the story is assembled. Time for debate, rationale and discussion is allowed. Students then engage in follow up activities. Strip stories are highly recommended because they concentrate on communication and analysis of reading.

3. Jack Wigfield suggests the One-Word Approach at the beginning level which moves quickly to two and three words. The dialogue supplies the words which are used in a drill which is meant to illustrate the relationship between letters and sounds:

1: SLEEP, SLEEP, SLEEP.
2: WHAT?
1: SLEEP.
2: ME?
1: NO. ME.
2: YOU?
1: YES. I LIKE TO SLEEP.
2: OK. GO TO SLEEP.
1: Z - Z - Z - Z[12]

This technique allows students to begin reading in English almost immediately while giving practice in the rhythm, stress and intonation of the language.

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[12]Jack Wigfield, "ESL Adult Literacy" (Paper delivered at the TESOL Convention, New York City, 1976), p. 17.

4. The CLOZE technique blanks out every "nth" word of a passage. Students read and fill in the blanks on their own or from multiple choices. The level of comprehension determines the appropriateness of the responses.

ex: There are 50 states _____ the United States.

My state is _____.

5. Snap reading is another approach appropriate for beginning ESL readers. Snap reading requires that the teacher read orally at normal speed, stop and snap her fingers, which alerts a student to read the next word. The teacher resumes reading, stops, and snaps her fingers again. A different student reads the next word and so on. Students gain practice in listening, appropriate eye movement, and reading individual words with proper pronunciation and intonation so the natural flow of the teacher's oral reading is not disturbed. "The flexibility of snap reading enhances its utility. This technique can be used equally well with a sentence, paragraph, or lengthy passage. The teacher also enjoys the flexibility of choosing which word the student will read."[13]

6. There is also the technique of adapting materials. In this technique, the teacher selects or creates a passage suited to the needs and interests of the students. The teacher simplifies the passage in vocabulary and structure without diluting the concepts. Thus, students practice the skills of reading using a passage appropriate to their ability.

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[13]Emilio G. Cortez, "Snap Reading," RELC Journal, Vol. 6, No. 1 (June, 1975), p. 18.

The following is a partial list of suggestions ESL teachers can employ to develop the skills of reading.

1. As soon as possible, separate the students in need of literacy trafning from those who have literacy skills in the language learning class. Do so based on a placement test and/or teacher recommendation.

2. Names of letters should be learned as soon as possible and the concept established that in English the letters have names as well as sounds.

3. Spelling can be taught in the ESL literacy classroom. Spelling by sound is an essential skill (phonics) which requires careful step-by-step ear, eye and hand training and coordination. This skill allows the student to spell thousands of phonetically regular words and syllables with accuracy and confidence. Accuracy of this skill takes a long time, much perseverance, patience and loads of practice. Upon mastery, students can proceed to spelling by patterns. This incorporates the skill of spelling by sound with an overall knowledge of the peculiarities of English spelling. (The Limited English Proficient Speaker can make himself understood if he can spell a word that is hard to pronounce.) Unfamiliar words should be avoided, if possible, while beginners are building the concept and skill of spelling and reading.

4. Teach Limited English Proficient Speakers how to hold a book, turn pages, move from the left to the right on a line and from the front to the back in a book.

5. Teach sight words. The majority of words we read are sight

words.

6. Provide visual and contextual clues to improve level of comprehension.

7. To improve, reinforce, review, reward, reduce inhibition and raise attentiveness, use vocabulary cards, the Language Master, music and games.

8. Scramble letters in words or words in sentences to focus on spelling and word order:

ex: ojb - job or

job. I a need

9. To develop cognitive skills, write a list of four or five words. Students select the one that doesn't belong or the word that is the main idea.

penny nickel job dime quarter

penny nickel coins dime quarter

10. To examine the way the sounds of English are related to spelling, the teacher writes a word on the board and the students produce words that rhyme. Regularities and irregularities in phonics can be pointed out.

men	air
pen	bear
ten	care

11. Read to the students regularly.

12. Have students collect antonyms, synonyms and multiple meanings of words.

13. Distribute sheets of paper containing pictures of objects or

situations on the left side and have students select the appropriate sentence describing the visual.

a. I'm tired. Good night.

b. Wake up! It's time to go to work.

c. I'm hungry. Let's have lunch.

14. Teach students to read clocks, charts, schedules, scales, measures, maps, signs, numbers and abbreviations.

15. Teach structural analysis including syllabication, root words, prefixes and suffixes.

16. From life's experiences, adults can make inferences, make judgements, listen critically and get facts. Most adults will have developed these skills even it they're not literate in their own language since these skills are to some degree basic to any decision making. What they need to learn is to do all of this with a printed page. Literal comprehension, being able to regurgitate what the author has written, is the lowest level of comprehension. The skills of interpretive comprehension also need to be developed. Some of these skills are generalizing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, making inferences, establishing cause and effect relationships, etc.

17. Teach students how to learn and how to take tests.

18. Introduce literature in the abridged or condensed ESL version.

19. Have a classroom library with well-illustrated books and magazines on many subjects of interest and on many ability levels. to help contribute to the love of reading.

The following are some suggestions to teach and practice

writing in the ESL classroom.

1. Give systematic instruction in writing mechanics.

2. Teach students to form the letters and copy what they can read. Cursive writing should be introduced when the students ask for it or when the teacher feels Limited English Proficient Speakers are ready. The loops, strokes and curves of cursive are difficult. Furthermore, some students need to be taught the relationship of the letters to the line and appropriate spacing.

3. Teach students how to write checks, notes, shopping lists, and letters.

4. Dictate words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs to students. Dictation is a teaching technique which proves extremely effective at all levels of instruction. It has positive values when used to reinforce the many phases of language arts activities. It ensures attentive listening; it trains pupils to distinguish sounds; it helps solidify the concepts of punctuation; it enables pupils to learn to transfer oral sounds to written symbols; it helps to develop aural comprehension and it assists in self-evaluation.

5. Have students keep a journal in which they must write a thought every day. As in sports, daily practice improves performance.

In conclusion, the State-of-the Art in teaching the ESL skills of listening and speaking is in very good condition in terms of philosophy, objectives, curriculum and materials. However, the entire area of teaching literacy skills to ESL students is barely in the formative stage. Teaching adults to read in a

second language when they are illiterate in their native language requires special training and techniques. The training is seriously lacking, the techniques are in a developmental stage and the materials are almost non-existent. Monies must be spent in research, teacher training and materials development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Immigrants and refugees have been flocking to the United States since the nation's birth. Why are there suddenly so many problems with the present wave? Prior to the mid 1970's, refugees and immigrants were more educated and better prepared for the transition to a new life. Thus, in many cases the teaching/learning of ESL was sufficient. On the other hand, the 1979-and-later arrivals seem to have come from rural backgrounds, possessing few portable skills and arriving in the United States during a major recession with record unemployment. Now ESL courses need to be accompanied by literacy and vocational training. The following are recommendations intended to assist ESL/Literacy Programs.

1. Literacy schemes are endemic, often on a small scale, barely touching the surface. National planning can allocate resources to where they can best and most beneficially be used. The pooling of smaller local programs can avoid duplication of services which leads to waste. Cities/counties can establish a Literacy Commission. The membership could consist of representatives from business, government, libraries, community colleges, social agencies and the media. Tutoring centers could be established in neighborhoods in which volunteer tutors, who have been trained in basic techniques of teaching ESL and literacy, could supplement on a one-to-one basis that which is formally taught in ABE/ESL Programs.
2. Business and industry can hire teachers to provide classes in ESL/literacy to their employees as it specifically relates to

work. I have personally taught in three such situations. The first was in a hospital where the maintenance staff were almost all Limited English Proficient Speakers. Employees were taught to say the names of tools and equipment, to understand and follow directions, to read and complete work orders and to respond to common hospital jargon such as "STAT". At the plant of a major supermarket chain, Limited English Proficient employees met in the boardroom three times a week after work for basic ESL, as it related to safety on the job. Lastly, I met with Limited English Proficient employees at a manufacturing firm between shifts in the cafeteria to teach them English. In all cases, management helped design the curriculum by providing the concepts, vocabulary and phrases which needed to be taught.

Both Limited English Proficient employees and employers benefited. Employees benefited by learning because what was taught was related to their immediate needs. Also, in many instances, I was able to lure employees to the Community College I was affiliated with for additional ESL/literacy training. In some cases, employers provided attendance incentives. Inducements included a bonus upon successful completion of the objectives, purchase of student books and materials, and catered sandwiches for after work classes. Employers greatly benefited with excellent work attendance and increased productivity on the part of the employees. The pictures and bulletins in company and public newspapers helped their public relations too!

3. Excellent ESL Programs should:

a. have counseling services to help students cope with needs that otherwise interfere with language learning.

b. provide support services such as child care since illiterate women play a significant role in the health, welfare and education of their children.

c. offer a variety of courses for varying abilities and achievement with placement testing. Students should be encouraged to commit themselves to long term goals rather than to merely a twelve week class.

d. hire enough trained teachers to maintain a low pupil/ teacher ratio. The teachers should have the services of a teacher aide at the beginning levels and the consulting services of a learning disabilities specialist.

e. have a written curriculum and provide materials that are relevant to the student's world and ability.

f. offer additional courses in basic consumer math and citizenship, taught with ESL techniques.

g. seek the help of volunteer native language tutors.

h. provide classes not only at a central location but also offer classes at apartment complexes, libraries and places of business.

i. make local businesses aware of the teachers who can teach ESL in an industrial setting.

j. offer intensive programs for those who can attend classes full-time and

k. provide relevant staff development activities.

4. Universities must develop programs to train teachers in adult ESL and literacy.

5. ESL teachers need to enroll in national/statewide professional associations and attend workshops sponsored by Service Centers which feature nationally known teacher trainers. Teachers also need to have a critical eye in evaluating published materials and be willing to share ideas and materials because of the dearth of ESL literacy materials.

6. Professional organizations need to assist the states in setting up guidelines for certification in ESL to guarantee a high level of professionalism.

7. In turn, funding needs to be long range so that qualified staff are maintained and jobs are not tenuous from semester to semester. Funds also need to be put into ESL/literacy research.

8. Issues need to be addressed including the discussion of such questions as:

   a. Should enrollment in ESL classes be limited to documented aliens?

   b. Should priority money be given to those students who are the least educated?

   c. Should students be charged tuition according to their ability to pay?

   d. Should English be formally named as the language of the land?

9. Radio and television can play a vital role in the future of ESL and the development of literacy skills. Mass media can reach

rural areas and even the poorest of families own radios and televisions. Supplementary ESL and literacy instruction can be provided in educational broadcasts and in the native language programs. Through the use of cable, the needs of special local Limited English Proficient Speakers can be met. The possibilities are tremendous if the energies and knowledge of trained technicians and educators are amalgamated.

10. Lastly, I recommend patience. While we help adult immigrants and refugees in their struggle to survive in America, rest assured their children are already becoming mainstreamed in American life because of the excellent Bilingual and ESL Programs in public schools.

CONCLUSION

The inability to speak and understand English poses a real barrier to a high quality of life. The command of English and the development of functional literacy are essential to the expansion of productivity and the reduction of social welfare programs. Being able to speak English will help to move the underprivileged minorities toward the mainstream of American life.

The teaching of ESL, survival contents and literacy skills must continue to be made available. In these times when social programs are in trouble, funding agencies must realize that the key for acculturation and mainstreaming is the learning of English. Government need not be the only financial resource. Corporations, foundations, business, industry and neighborhood tutoring centers can help.

> "Not charity but a chance. Not a coin in my hat but a tool in my hand. If you give me a fish, you have fed me only once. If you teach me to fish, you have fed me a lifetime." Quote for the illiterate pauper.

APPENDIX

Materials for ESL Literacy need to move students toward independence. They should provide the most basic instruction in reading and critical thinking. They should prepare adults to make decisions in the real world. The following is a list of ESL materials appropriate for students in need of literacy training. In addition to these, students should be taught to read in the real world so that TV listings, garment washing instructions, package directions, train schedules and signs and the like are also essential classroom materials.

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